

Selangor PKR at risk of a split?

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The separation of political and administrative powers in the Selangor leadership of PKR is seen by political observers as exposing the party in the state to the risk of a split.

They fear that this could be the ultimate result unless PKR vice-president Mohd Azmin Ali, who has taken over the post of Selangor PKR chief from Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, can consolidate the party in the state.

Azmin Ali PC in Parliament 020709 02PKR, on June 27, appointed Azmin (left) as its Selangor chief after it was reported that a group of 15 PKR MPs close to Azmin, the MP for Gombak, were said to have teamed up to oust Khalid as the Selangor menteri besar.

Azmin will now handle the political matters in the state while Khalid, the state assemblyman for Ijok, will remain as the menteri besar and hold executive powers.

Political observer Asri Salleh said the separation of powers between the Selangor PKR chairperson and the menteri besar might cause the purported split in PKR to widen.

The party members and supporters in the state could be divided into two groups, one backing the menteri besar and the other, the state PKR chief, he said.

"If there really is a split in PKR, it will have adverse consequences for the Pakatan Rakyat in Selangor (which also comprises DAP and PAS) where there could be party hopping by MPs and state assemblymen due to a crisis of confidence," he said.

Damage control

Asri, who is a political science lecturer at the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) campus in Dungun, Terengganu, also said that on another perspective, the appointment of Azmin as the Selangor PKR chief could be seen as a move for damage control in Selangor PKR.

NONE"Abdul Khalid's administration is seen as having caused disunity among MPs and state assemblymen, so much so that some party members have switched parties.

"The longer Khalid (right) remains as state party chief, the deeper the degree of disunity that could grow," he said.

Asri also did not rule out the possibility that Azmin's appointment could be seen as an attempt to remove Khalid as the menteri besar, adding that the alleged move to topple him had started a long time ago but had only now come into the open.

Khalid, who is also the MP for Bandar Tun Razak, had dismissed speculation that he had given up his post of Selangor PKR chief under pressure.

He had said that he had limited time to attend to political matters because administrative matters ate up much of his time.

Another political observer, Assoc Prof Shaharuddin Badaruddin of UiTM in Shah Alam, said

the separation of powers was at risk of fuelling drastic differences of opinion between Azmin and Khalid.

"If such a situation (separation of powers) can help establish stability, then it is a good move," he told Bernama.

"As I see it, it is a normal appointment (of Azmin as Selangor PKR chief). Perhaps, it is in preparation for the next general election. Perhaps, it is to consolidate the party. Politically, I see it more as a decision to resolve problems faced by Abdul Khalid," he said.

Shaharuddin also said that Azmin's appointment could be seen as a check and balance for the state government.

"Here, the party can criticise the (state) government to achieve improvement. The only snag or risk is that differences of opinion can result in undesirable implications where the government and party will not be able to work together," he said.

Asked whether Azmin's appointment was an attempt to remove Khalid as the menteri besar, he said it was most probably not the case.

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